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Poems by
Farmer
Reynolds



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POEMS

BY

FARMER REYNOLDS

(J. MASON REYNOLDS)



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THE
SMITH-BROOKS
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Dedicated to the Memory of the Author

J. MASON REYNOLDS,

A Good and True Man.

—J. MAURICE FINN.

LORD RUPERT AND LADY CLYDE.

[This is a story true to life and faithfully told from Grand Rapids to Chicago.]

My muse has not those rainbow wings,
With which old bards were blessed;
She 'ssembles more a buxom maid,
Like Eve in Eden dressed.
Not nude; no virgin cheek shall blush,
At charms by her displayed,
For she but wears a rustic robe
From prints, not fig leaves made.

“Divine inflatus” from my muse,
Must read like florid sense,
For she but walks, nor flies nor glides,
At logic's great expense.
Her hose are cotton; stoga shoes
Conceal her shapely feet,
But never was a plumper form,
Or lips so red and sweet.

My tale is of a modern age,
Its plot all true to life;
Nor should the faithful scribe be blamed,
If Rupert had a wife!
Of Lady Clyde—her graces shine,
Or cloud beneath her veil,
As vestal beauty blushes red,
Or doubtful virtues pale.

I cannot see (and pray can you?)
Why Venus brings delight
To those who read bold Shakspeare through,
And think Adonis right.
Or Haidee—angelic miss!
And Julia, just as well—
They all sipped sweet, forbidden bliss,
Then quaffed the dregs—that's hell!

But Prologue, halt! your reckless feet,
 Unsandaled, tread a tale,
Whose doors are locked to other hands
 Than such as lift the veil.
For them alone to wander free,
 Upon enchanted ground,
Where Rupert and my Lady Clyde,
 A "tree of knowledge" found.

THE TALE.

A summer day. The full-faced sun,
 Beams florid in the West,
And harvesters their sickles drop,
 To seek the shade for rest.
The rich or idle ride or walk,
 In boulevard or grove;
Old men of pain or wisdom talk,
 And lad and lass of love.

Behold a city in the West,
 Begirt with pine clad hills,
Adown whose side a Cold Brook runs,
 And countless sparkling rills.
Grand River through the valley winds,
 Its log-rode fertile tide,
While Indian skiff and larger craft
 Upon its surface ride.

O Valley City! cradle place
 Of intrigues yet untold!
Who can your hidden ways unwind,
 Or gild your faults with gold?
Who, walking through your parks and lanes,
 Or kneeling at your shrines,
Would guess a Persian romance slept
 Within these dreamy lines?

Ye gods! could Italy but speak,
 Or Ceylon sing her lays,
The ancient poets all would yield,
 Their crown to modern days.

Lake Como or fair Bosphorus,
No plots of love can boast,
So deep and wild as Michigan
Along her lake-bound coast.

I care not for the myths or songs,
Of legend-lands of old!
Their tales which dazzled us at first,
Are dulled from being told.
The Alps have settled into hills,
And faded now is Rome,
To men who climb our Rocky wilds,
And call Chicago, home.

Lord Rupert in a castle lived,
And Lady Clyde the same,
Although Grand Rapids *neither* knew,
By coat-of-arms or name.
Their titles hide their proud *in cog*,
And cast a mystic cloak,
Upon the shoulders of two hearts,
Which otherwise had broke.

A summer day, our muse has said,
Should introduce a scene,
So now behold Lord Rupert's wife
Reclined upon the green;
Upon a mossy mound she sits,
Beneath low hanging bows,
While at her feet Lord Rupert kneels,
Persuading her with vows.

"No! no!" cries he, "you do me wrong!
I never was untrue
To priest-made bonds which gall alike,
My own proud self and you.
But listen, wife: I love thee not—
Ah, would we were apart,
For Cupid never can revive
A false and frozen heart!"

And as he spoke Lord Rupert rose,
And, frowning, strode away,
While Madam Rupert coldly laughed,
Then mockingly did say :
"The wise marines, my gracious lord,
Might credit your protest,
But eyes like mine can pierce the cloak,
And put the heart to test.

Aye, curl those lips with hateful scorn,
(They never clung to mine!)
And droop those orbs of rayless night,
Which for your *mistress* shine!
I know your rakish life so well,
And all your stale pretense,
That here we part! Farewell, my lord,
I'll quickly get me hence."

Ah! why this snapping of the bonds
Of wedlock in a trice?
Was Lord and Lady Rupert right—
Is nuptial sunstroke nice?
Well, well, such scenes are common now,
As in old Bible days,
When concubines outnumbered wives,
And both were worse than slaves!

Yet critic halt, and view the facts,
Before a verdict find;
Inspect this couple *cap-a-pie*,
In body, soul and mind.
I see that Madam's lips are thin,
Her cheeks are palid, too,
While wrinkles on her marble brow,
The dullest eye can view.

Nor stop at this (if good or bad)
But catch that faded limb,
Which Rupert saw as Madam stamped
Her dainty foot at him.

And clasp that jeweled hand so cold,
 (Not thinner than in youth),
Ah! Madam has no buxom charms—
 To her a fatal truth!

For ice is like her haughty heart,
 And cold her proud blood flows,
No sooner would her passions melt,
 Than highest Alpine snows.
She might have loved Lord Rupert once,
 With all her frigid life,
But tropic blood hale manhood craves,
 As much as soul, in wife.

And here, O muse, lay down this law—
 A Medes-and-Persian rule:
For sickly, charmless maids to wed,
 Is worse than playing fool!
The marriage couch should robust be,
 And woe if looks have lied!
For love is nearest kin to lust,
 With bridegroom and his bride.

Away with crippled, pious cant
 Of celibatic ban!
A jolly, buxom woman loves
 A hale and hearty man.
And bodies all the same as brains,
 Are holy in God's eyes;
For sex immortal is as mind—
 If one, the other dies.

Lord Rupert to the station walks,
 A noble solemn beast,
Nor cares he where his train shall fly—
 If North, South, West or East.
His bounding blood and long-starved heart,
 Defy both pride and shame,
For Rupert with his countless faults,
 One virtue has—he's game!

His childless home, though mansion-like,
Has been a castle-cell;
His married life a tragedy
Upon the stage of hell!
Unbounded wealth he leaves behind,
With greater at his side—
The priceless gem he takes with him,
His blushing Lady Clyde!

Or, call her siren, traitress, fiend,
A wanton or a witch;
Her matchless charms are manifold,
Her blood runs warm and rich!
And deep and deathless is that love,
(Why call it cruel name?)
Which drags her from a lofty height
Into a life of shame.

Yes, rankest shame! But weigh the facts,
Before one prudish groan,
And let a woman without sin,
Cast first a cruel stone.
Philosophy has many sides,
And Nature secret ways
Of tying and untying knots,
These polygamic days.

My muse was shocked; and so, no doubt,
Conductor on the cars,
Who caught a glimpse behind a veil,
Of eyes lit up like stars;
And saw a lady, not his wife,
To Rupert's shoulder cling—
The twain, like pair of cooing doves,
For nesting place take wing.

Such things are wrong; but chroniclers,
If faithful to their trust,
Must paint the old world as it is—
Its sorrows, love or lust.

The records that we daily print,
Are not more rank with sin,
Than testaments by Mark or Luke,
Of intrigues that have been.

The watchful sun that stood on guard,
Now strode behind the hill,
And twilight blushed as if aware
Of dark, forboding ill.
Dull Luna, who relieved old Sol,
Looked down with dreamy eyes,
While shrill the iron charger neighs,
And swift his carriage flies.

If ever Cupid, right or wrong,
Holds magic, kingly sway,
It is at eventide—the hour
Of full-blown, fragrant day.
Then wings of passion fan the air,
And blissful currents run,
From kindred hearts as rays of light,
From Venus or the sun.

O, potent hour when Adam fell,
And Eve temptation brought,
What wild enchantment have your powers
And fascination wrought!
Not deeds of violence and crime—
They midnight darkness seek;
But sins of love, whose mention here
Would crimson virtue's cheek.

No Nero ever infants slayed,
(Their *birth* the hour suggests);
Nor sword did Alexander draw,
With twilight in the West!
So Rupert and his lady love,
These weird fancies felt,
As Fate a nuptial mantle spread
Upon their couch of guilt.

Another scene; another day;
Let night her secrets keep;
The wicked world awakes anew,
From sweet, refreshing sleep.
Chicago! clutch with zeal thy crown,
For younger cities claim
A scepter set with diadems
Belonging to thy fame!

What though the Palmer and your courts,
Have regal honors won?
St. Louis and Grand Rapids, too,
As honored feats have done;
Nor gilded, dizzy Paris holds
A higher handed sway,
Nor Michigan—a Paradise
For Bacchanalian lay.

A cottage on your border stands;
A bird-like, love retreat,
Fit for proud Persian kings and queens,
For modern nabobs meet.
And here Lord Rupert takes his bride,
(Why harsher term employ?)
He gallant as a Tudor knight,
She ravishing and coy.

Such are my heroes (or my fiends—
Their status priests may fix;
A poet's duty, truth to tell,
Not facts to gild or mix.)
And in their cozy, Eden home,
As artists only make,
Bold muse, intrude with paint and brush,
And faithful sketches take.

What form is that, with regal cast,
Enrobed as Eastern queen,
Whose charms would dazzle anchorite
As in the lamplight seen?

And he who sits on silken couch,
Enraptured, at her side—
Divinely moulded, ripened health,
Fresh crowned with grace and pride?

What matters black or blue the eyes?
Or cut or shade of hair?
If Rupert have strong limbs and beard?
Or madam's neck be bare?
All manhood one—enough is said;
Rich womanhood the other—
A king, fit father of a clan,
A queen ordained as mother.

I know in romance, tints are drawn,
And finest shades appear;
The arms are cast; the bust and feet,
The lips, and brow and ear.
And make of shoe, and style of dress,
With attitude and gait;
The food partook, a frown or smile,
The stature—even weight.

My heroes are not thus portrayed,
Nor should they stand the test;
This favored vision must suffice,
And fancy paint the rest.
Their souls and brains, and thoughts and deeds,
Must save or damn this tale,
And not if Rupert's moustache curled,
Or madam's cheeks could pale.

Nor would I passion-harvests plant,
In healthy, virgin mind,
That tears and thistles might spring up,
For shame to reap and bind.
Tell Powers dress his Grecian Slave
In petticoat or clout,
And from the Holy Bible tear
Its songs and pictures out,

Before a blush, or frown or word,
At scenes and thoughts displayed;
Or arguments, well meant and put,
Or facts in Nature laid—
Shall be attacked by critics' spear,
As boar by savage chased,
Or as good sense is hooted down
By those it never graced.

The pure in heart shall walk with me,
And sacred truths behold;
Nor answer make, save merry laugh,
To prudes who rant or scold.
Does virtue live on ignorance
In this precocious age?
No! Knowledge knows no youth or sex,
Methuselah or sage!

Lord Rupert spoke: "O lamb of love,
Safe gathered in my fold!
All worldly bliss, compared with thee,
Is dross—thy love is gold.
Let scandal sting: a nectar balm
Immortal are these lips!
No Gillead sweeter antidote,
No bee such honey sips."

A Hebe-like bosom flutters now,
With throes of swelling pride,
As Rupert presses to his breast,
His fallen Lady Clyde.
Her beaming eyes and coral lips,
Before her words reply—
The pressure of a dimpled hand,
The echo of a sigh.

And thus she speaks: "O Rupert, hush!
I had a dream last night,
Which almost froze my fevered blood
With superstitious fright.

My angel mother came to me,
When sleeping at your side,
And said in sad, reproachful voice—
‘My daughter not a bride!’

“And Madam Rupert, too, appeared,
(I hiding in your arms)
And cried, ‘Vile prostitute!
To sell your soul and charms!’
O Rupert, love me! hold me close!
Strange thoughts distract my brain;
The joy I feel is so intense
It almost seems like pain!”

“Away,” cries Rupert, “with remorse—
This childish fear and shame!
Forever will I shield thee with
My fortune and my name.
A crown upon this brow shall rest,
A scepter in this hand;
My bonny bride shall rule a queen—
The fairest of the land.

What though your haughty father rave,
Or vulgar world protest?
The courts are quickly bought or sold—
This arm and sword the rest!
Let Madam to her dower cling,
Or seek her dotard sire;
Her temper is a coat of mail,
Her tongue a sword of fire.

Or hail divorce! I care not what—
No power there is above,
Nor man, nor church, nor death itself,
Shall blast our holy love!”
“Hold! Rupert, hold!” says Lady Clyde,
“We ought not heaven defy;
But rather meek forgiveness ask,
As in your arms I lie.”

“What!” Rupert cries, “would you condemn
This proud, heroic flight?
Does not all Nature sanctify
Our wedlock, wrong or right?
Away with theologic cant,
And social bondage, too!
Our love is Paradise enough—
I fear no power but you.

So hushed again was Lady Clyde,
And soothed for conscience sore;
And Rupert swayed his mistress now
As many times before.

Go strangle charms of robust sex,
Unchained in human blood!
Convert the wild bull on the plains,
Or tame the champing stud!
No power like *lust* hath swayed mankind
Since Solomon of old—
Not even hate, or fear of hell,
Or greed for place or gold.

Mark Anthony no more a slave
To Cleopatra’s charms,
Than kings and queens in modern days,
Whose thrones are blocks or farms.
And old King Cole, that jolly soul,
With cups and fiddlers three,
Portrays a type of fruitage ripe
On life’s forbidden tree.

Are such things rare? my circle low?
Consult the Judge and Press,
And find that culprits do abound
In silk, as plainer dress.
Deny who can that marriage bonds
Have grown like withes of grass;
That golden wedlock, under test,
Proves often plated brass.

See blasted homes, like wreck of ships,
Along some stormy strand—
Domestic pillars tumbled down,
As if by Samson hand.
Whence springs the blame—in mind and soul?
Or theologic ban?
Or sown the seeds in flesh and blood,
The worldly half of man?

This bard was pious from his birth;
So question not his creed,
But to his wisdom bow the head,
And give this proverb heed:
'Tis SEX that marries—hes and shes
Alone have wish to wed;
And nuptial discord mostly hides
Within a double bed.

They say that jack and gill will work,
Despite unequal size,
If harnessed side by side, and drove
With blinders on their eyes.
But men and women thus deformed,
Awaking or in sleep,
Will find each other's horrors out,
By some unlucky peep.

The soul can hide; and so can faith,
Or even waning love:
But leprosy or impotence
Are only screened above!
So bodies shall well mated be
In this poetic show;
Let Rupert and my Lady Clyde
Take all the shame and woe.

I honor stalwart health in man,
Almost as much as brains;
And plumpness in a wife or maid
Rich admiration gains.

Galvanic jars resemble hearts,
The nerves, connecting wire,
Upon the hidden length of which
Runs love—electric fire!

And as the sun and planets have
Huge gravitating force,
That weds them in harmonic flight
Upon their endless course;
So bosoms—deep and swelling hearts,
Magnetic power invoke,
Which makes their union harmony—
Not discord or a yoke.

But stanzas spring like mushrooms up
(Not wanted or in place)
Along the highway of my plot,
Whose thread we now must trace.
Enough that heroes should be hale!
But never be it said,
We put a crown on beastly lust,
Or tear one from the head.

A leap like Gulliver now take,
And span a dozen years;
Or, Rip Van Winkle-like awake
Within a vale of tears.
Not ours to tread the daily route
Of labor, love or rest,
To number bottles Rupert drank,
Or gaze when Madam dressed.

All life must plod; in higher walks
Or humble paths the same:
The odds are not so much in facts,
As fancy and in name.
A king must eat, and dress, and sleep,
Not less than does his serf;
The one is ruler by his throne,
The other of the turf.

Wherefore depict the struggles had,
The rapture, shame or woe—
Links in this chain of tragedy,
Now snapped by single blow?
I knew his lord and lady well,
And secrets might unfold,
But would not, though each spying word
Would turn to blocks of gold.

Lord Clyde's demise; and Rupert's wife,
(Who wrecked upon the sea),
And children born to Lady Clyde,
Now angels—there were three.
Or what sensations, here or there,
Such scandals may have wrought;
What travels into foreign lands,
And pleasures dearly bought.

Remorse they had, or moral pangs,
And rampant passions cloyed;
Flirtations either may have sought,
With harmony destroyed.
"All vanity!" as Solomon,
In wisdom truly said—
And thus they seem as drawing nigh,
My lady's dying bed.

O crumbling flesh! delusive mold!
Thy charms so quickly die,
That what their worth unless, O man,
They live beyond the sky?
To-day voluptuous lips are kissed,
With clinging, rare delight,
To-morrow they are cold in death,
As ice and marble white.

The curls which on our pillow lay;
The form that rapture knew;
A noble heart which beat for us
Alone, and ever true.

The hand we clasped, the melting eyes—
Alas! they fade away,
As buds which blossom in a night
And wither in a day.

No weeping crowd her couch surrounds,
To watch the parting breath;
Lord Rupert and his bride alone
Receive their master—Death.
O pain intense!—I know your power—
Have seen it on the field,
From saber thrusts and screaming ball,
When heroes scorned to yield.

In ocean wrecks, on gibbet, too;
From loathesome, fell disease,
When spirits racked with agony
Have taken flight with ease:
But *loving death* outpains them all!
Its tortures are untold—
The monster clutches not the throat,
But stabs the inner soul.

The *object* of such love ne'er dies,
A partner in the pain;
The cords between two hearts are cut,
Two souls are clept in twain.
Then wonder not, O worldly mind,
If Rupert stood alone,
And gazed upon his Lady Clyde,
As statue made of stone.

No angel-wings bestirred the air;
No whispered hope was heard.
Lord Rupert spoke—despondency
Weighed down each solemn word:
“O wounded bird! what cruel shaft
Could pierce your precious life?
Thou hast a Saviour been to me,
Not cold and hateful wife.

"All man-made compacts we defied,
But honored Nature's sway,
And now my birdling from her mate
Is flying far away.
And this is all! O cruel fate,
Why tear from man his wife,
When reason proves the silent grave
Shall end all wedded life?"

"O Rupert, kneel in prayer by me,
Nor plaint to heaven make;
I see the angels gather 'round,
My tired soul to take:
And she you left is in the van,
No hatred in her eyes,
For all our wrongs shall righted be,
Beyond the golden skies.

"Our children, and my father, too,
And mother—sweet delight!
All beckon me with open arms
To realms of peace and light.
Our paths have strayed—those halcyon days
Were passion-cursed as wild:
O Jesus, save the man I love!
And take—repentant—child!"

As sunshine gilds the passing cloud,
A smile lit up her face,
And Lady Clyde, if anywhere,
Was at the Throne of Grace.
Her matchless bosom now was still;
Her Southern blood was cold;
Extinguished were those beaming eyes,
Once lit with passion bold.

Her tomb is locked. No man shall gaze
Upon her fair remains;
Nor woman with a scornful stare,
Whose hands show darker stains.

Condemn her not; but wisdom learn
Of error that was done,
That wedded or unwedded life
May all the smoother run.

Lord Rupert lived; but all unchanged,
And haughty as before;
While honors strewed his lonely path,
And knocked upon his door.

From Michigan to Eastern lands
His dashing course was turned,
And warlike laurels grace his brow,
In distant battles earned.
First in danger, courting death,
Nor fearing God nor man;
He lives a hero (good or bad),
Upon a lofty plan.

For him to lead his dashing band
Of Arabs on the plain,
And in the cause of Egypt die
Or deathless honors gain.
But woman never shall supplant
His sainted, angel bride,
Nor from his giant heart crush out
His love for Lady Clyde.

LET US SHAKE.

My hand ain't bejeweled and slender,
But brawny and calloused in spots,
For I've swung both the axe and the cradle,
And plowed in a good many lots;
And my grip sometimes has a vigor
Not proper these delicate days,
Thus showing how awkward a farmer
Can be in a number of ways.
But warm blood runs down to my fingers—
Let us hope it is loyal and white—
And I go for the man that is under,
No matter who started the fight.
So if you've a mind to be friendly,
Then, just for humanity's sake,
Let's stretch out a hand to each other,
And manfully, cordially shake.

I never brag much as to morals,
Nor claim to be pious and nice,
Because of things that are worldly
I sometimes have taken a slice;
But when all our cases are argued,
And judgment is found at the end,
It won't be because I was heartless,
Or false and untrue to a friend;
For this is my creed and my motto:
What other mistakes I shall make,
I won't turn my back on a fellow,
Nor swindle the hand that I shake.
So, if you've a mind to be friendly,
Then, just on a neighborly score,
Let's strike all our digits together,
As never they grappled before.

I ain't overloaded with riches,
And never bet much on my clothes;
But I buy all my comforts and victuals,
And frolic with life as it goes;

And, although my pew is a back one,
The rent is reg'larly paid;
And I hear what the preacher is saying
All the same without a parade;
And this seems to me good religion,
Whatever the doctors may say:
No man can afford to be stylish
Unless he is able to pay.
Besides, I despise without measure
To borrow, as well as to lend,
On other than strict rules of business,
Applied to a foe as a friend.
So, now, unless you're offended,
Why, just for humanity's sake,
Let's stretch out a hand to each other,
And manfully, cordially shake.

I don't know as much as some others,
But never assumed to be wise;
Only nobody can argue me out of
What I see with my open eyes.
And I've sense enough to be simple
In manner and what I may say,
Nor care to be stiff and affected,
Or grand in a terrible way.
And I say this a little conceited,
For I hold it as well in the end,
If our heads ain't so spacious and heavy
That our bodies must wither and bend.
And I love this old world all the better,
Because we must leave it behind,
And sail away on a venture
To a realm everlastingly mind.
Perhaps you are shocked at this notion?
If not, and you readily take,
Why, throw out a palm to a fellow,
And we'll manfully, cordially shake.

I honor such men as are pious,
And never cross swords with a priest,
Agreeing with Fletcher and Wesley—
That is, in regard to the "feast!"

And when Mary Ann in her white robes
Kneels down by our bedside to pray,
I know she is wisest in such things,
And feel she is leading the way.
But somehow the dogmas and *isms*,
Which always must go with the rest,
Are hard for a fellow to swallow,
Yes—even if he would be blest!
Yet some things are fixed and eternal—
Religious beyond every doubt,
And no man will scoff or deny it,
With his wife and his children about.
But, alas! I fear you're offended:
Never mind—for humanity's sake,
Just stretch out your hand like a brother,
And manfully, cordially shake.

I ain't what they call a "reformer,"
With new-fangled notions of life,
Yet I go for some things that are solid,
And brag on my babies and wife.
And if I don't rant about "Progress,"
Nor sign all the pledges in town,
Some folks who pretend to go faster
Have also been known to go down.
And somehow I hold the opinion,
That taking an old-fashioned gait,
Makes a man and his household as happy
As even a two-forty rate.
And Mary and I have concluded,
That laugh as they may about "spheres,"
Few women have ever yet voted,
And won't for a good many years.
But maybe *you* are a "reformer,"
With sorrow or glory at stake—
If so, pitch in like a hero,
We'll manfully, cordially shake.

But now my song must be ended,
With many a weakness unsaid;
Do you hold I am reckless and worldly,
Or weak in the heart and the head?

No matter. I speak for forgiveness,
Whatever the side you may take,
And again, to be cordial and friendly,
I offer my hand for a shake.

IT NEVER PAYS.

It never pays to fret and growl
When fortune seems our foe;
The better bred will look ahead
And strike the braver blow.
For luck is work;
And those who shirk
Should not lament their doom,
But yield the play
And clear the way,
That better men have room.

It never pays to wreck the health
In drudging after gain,
And he is sold who thinks that gold
Is cheapest bought with pain.
An humble lot,
A cozy cot,
Have tempted even kings,
For station high,
That wealth will buy,
Not oft contentment brings.

It never pays! A blunt refrain
Well worthy of a song,
For age and youth must learn the truth
That nothing pays that's wrong.
The good and pure
Alone are sure
To bring prolonged success,
While what is right
In Heaven's sight
Is always sure to bless.

WHEN I DIE.

Take me ocean, take me sky,
When I die.
Old mother earth, I give to thee
My body when the soul is free,
When I die.
How, O Maker, will it seem?—
Like a fairy tale or dream,
When I die?
Will my loved ones all be there
With me in the golden air,
When I die?
If so, mourn not, those behind;
Love each other and be kind,
When I die.
Let no preacher talk and pray
When I in the coffin lay,
When I die.
God will weigh me as I am—
His to either bless or damn,
When I die.
Put my little keepsakes by,
Peep at them sometimes and sigh,
When I die.
Never mind a stone to raise,
Upon which a foe may gaze,
When I die.
Think of all the good I did
When you close the coffin lid,
When I die.
Pardon all the faults I had,
Thoughtless wrongs and actions bad,
When I die.
Thus I worship as I kneel:
Do you wish that way to feel
When I die?

HE WEPT.

[“Bob Ingersoll wept when Lotta sang ‘The Sweet By-and-By.’”—*Exchange*.]

He wept: No heart like his was ever dry,
And tears that gather in the eye
Of such as he, hot, manly, sacred tears,
Shall magnetize the coming years!
No priest his sacrament need ply,
When men like Ingersoll shall cry.

He wept: And Lotta, too, perchance did weep,
No bars the noble spirit keep;
As Mary wept, or Christ, or Saul,
So wept a MAN—Bob Ingersoll!
But is it worse to sob and cry,
Than cloak the truth and cringe and lie?

He wept: And others weep and sadly pray
For tokens of a summer day;
We float; we weep; we fear; we hope;
But never man with telescope
Has seen that mystic fairy land,
Or conversed with its angel band.

He wept: The heavens weep with holy dews,
And men whose souls are filled with truths,
Will always weep, as Jesus, in his misery,
Cried, “God, hast thou forsaken me?”
Ah! weeping speaks a godly man
Created on a human plan!

He wept: And others weep; their faith may be
By far, more orthodox; but he,
With brain and heart aflame,
Weeps not by creed or for a name—
The choir should hush—let silence fall
Before the tears of Ingersoll!

He wept: And then his merry laugh rang out:
The tears were symbols of a shout
For truth, for right, for manly thought
Above the sphere where men are bought!
No priest need fear, at Gabriel's call,
For Lotta or Bob Ingersoll.

JOLLY NATURE.

Why should mortal man be sad,
Saying life is dark and bad?
Nature sings her roundelay,
All the night and all the day.
Whistle winds, but never moan;
Give no sad or solemn tone—
Whistle, whistle and tune
For the flowers and birds of June!

Tinkle rain-drops, patter sweet,
On the roof or at our feet;
Blush, O clouds, like maidens fair,
As the sun shall kiss the air.
Smiling twilight, merry breeze,
Waft your music man to please,
So the sick or sad may see,
Life is full of melody.

Roll ye thunders, lightnings play,
Flashing through the clouds away;
Wavelets leap upon the beach,
Smiling fields your lesson teach;
Shooting buds and running streams—
Sporting thus all nature seems.
Why should mortals then be sad,
Thinking life is dark and bad?

“WHAT D’YE SOY?”

One night I sat a-dreaming,
In a cranky, lazy state,
On things which had a seeming
Like stupid luck or fate,
When thus I put the query,
(Not looking for reply):
“How is it, Mike O’Leary,
That the goose should hang so high?”
Ah! greater was my wonder,
Than either faith or joy,
When a voice said, like thunder—
“Hello, there! What d’ye soy?”

Upon my feet I started,
Not calling it a dream;
But being lion-hearted,
I shouted, “Does it seem,
Thou imp, or fiend, or raven,
Who taunts with such reply,
Myself alone (O craven!)
May be considered ‘high!’ ”
My fear had much abated,
And my pluck had no alloy
When again that echo prated—
“Hello, there! What d’ye soy?”

“Just this, old goblin—croaker—
Explain, now, if you can,
The living game of poker,
Each card to be a man?
Who made the pack to play with?
How was the game begun?
This puzzle you may stay with,
And pocket all the fun!”
The mocker answered plainly,
Like some coarse wag or boy,
In manner most ungainly—
Hello, there! What d’ye soy?”

With some contempt I shouted :
 "This poet's getting mad !
Your slang, old ghost, is scouted,
 Your manners are so bad.
Come, tell us why the stronger
 Are left to crush the weak ?
Why sin should rule us longer ?
 The proud to sway the meek ?
Must truth be sold or traded
 As some gay, tinsel'd toy ?"
But still that spook paraded—
 "Hello, there ! What d'ye soy ?"

"I want to know why millions
 Are born to die in sin ?
Why schemes if backed with billions
 Are always sure to win ?
Our shamrock-land is groaning
 Beneath a golden heel ;
Can God not hear the moaning,
 And rigid justice deal ?"
A laugh rang back, provoking,
 In tones of impish joy,
(As if the fun were choking)—
 "Hello, there ! What d'ye soy ?"

"O goblin, answer bring me,
 Why pain and sorrow thrive ;
Why these dark thoughts should sting me,
 Like bees from jostled hive."
To wake up Poe—his raven
 He has lost his "never more."
The ghost or devil snickered,
 Like lad or maiden coy,
Or as a wag well liquored—
 "Hello, there ! What d'ye soy ?"

This seemed like vile derision ;
 But still I pressed ahead,
And with a mule's decision,
 Appealingly thus said :

The earth is two-thirds water,
And half the land is swamp;
The devil gives no quarter,
Our king is gold or pomp.
The race is mostly heathen—
(Black or red without alloy)—
Is this design or reason?"
The gnome said, "What d'ye soy?"

Go to! old croaker—blame you!
Undo this web of life.
Can nothing solid shame you,
Or spur to quizzing strife?
Ask *me* why wrong is raging,
Why nations reel in war,
Why hate its fight is waging,
What pain and death are for.
Ask *me* why wedlock savors
Of anarchy and shame,
Why money governs favors,
And honor is a name!

Ye buzzard, crow or raven,
O, skip the Stygian stream,
And never be so craven
As again to haunt my dream.

ADDRESS TO BEELZEBUB.

Your Honor: Should one thus begin
In hailing thee, O Prince of Sin?
My muse would be extremely civil,
Nor say "Old Nick," nor "Satan," "Devil."
Such terms may be all right in Hades,
Where they have neither saints nor ladies,
Or in church lingo, all the same,
Where terror sleeps within a name.
But ours is a poet's task;
No fears have we, nor favors ask:
Our motto is, to be polite—
Except we aim for row, or fight.
So, even if the prudish scowl,
We say "Your Honor:—Fair or foul
May be your record, birth or fame—
What *is* there in a sounding name?
I've said "Your Honor," oft in court,
Because it is a lawyer's forte
(And safest, too,) to shun derision,
And bow to any blamed decision!
Just so, "my dear," "my lord," or "lady,"
Are terms whose moral tints are shady.
So, Pluto, Prince of Death and Sin,
Addressing thee, I thus begin.

In ancient records we have read,
And countless dominies have said,
Two mighty powers do exist—
The origin of both in mist.
The one a God of love and truth,
Who knoweth not old age or youth—
"Our Father" in the boundless skies,
To whom all praise should endless rise.
He made both heaven, earth and hell,
And yet—"He doeth all things well."
Creator, Ruler, Saviour, Jove,
Eternal source of life and love,

Before Him naught—not even you,
Nor any dark, infernal crew.
And such—this first, Almighty cause—
Is God, the author of all laws.
His throne is heaven, those realms on high,
Where angels dwell beyond the sky;
While your vile and black domain
Is down below—a world of pain!

In plainer words, two kingdoms seem
(A stubborn fact or idle dream)
To have a being and a place
In which to store the human race:
The one described before so well,
The other bluntly christened—"Hell."
And this *your* province seems to be,
With countless subjects, much like me.
I never learned to this extent,
That if you *own* the place or *rent*;
But as it is the "broadest way,"
You must have an almighty sway!
Compared, (one can truly state,
In view of that quite "narrow gate,")
Your minions as to those in Heaven,
Must be, at least, a score to*seven—
A fearful racket 'round your throne,
If every imp is bound to groan.

Well, now, so far this address runs,
Bereft of censure, doubts or puns:
It is the old and standard view,
And orthodox—so call it true.
I tread upon no sacred text,
So not a mortal can be vexed.
Creation, Adam, Eve and all,
The snake, the apple, and the fall,
The curse Jehovah put on man,
The wisdom (justice) of the plan;
Good Jonah and his honest whale,
The stilling of that mighty gale,
The flood with Noah, his beasts, his ark,
That Cana's wedding and its "lark,"

The devil in a herd of swine,
("Your Honor's" trouble and not mine);
The frogs of Egypt and the lice—
(As poetry, that's not so nice),
The tricks "Your Honor" played on Job,
In which you won a victor's robe,
Old Joshua, who stopped the sun,
And all the girls who saw the fun:
In short, I take the Bible through,
And brand each blessed doctrine true!

With this, is not my head quite level?
If so, hear me, thou mighty Devil:
Now Beelzebub, was Milton right—
Did you in heaven have a fight,
Through which you justly, quickly fell,
Into your present kingdom—Hell?
Before that, did you live in glory?
(I always liked old Milton's story);
Or, was you back in Paradise,
A serpent decked with gaudy lies,
Which led fair Eve from grace to fall,
In which (of course) "we sin-ed all?"
I ask you frankly: Tell your birth—
If it was Heaven, Hell or Earth?
And whom your parents could have been?
(Some yarns about this seem quite thin),
And what headquarters you control
Of human bodies, mind or soul?
The books and doctors differ so,
It fills a mortal brain with woe,
And makes him want to see your face,
And almost doubt that *other* place!

But say, good Satan, (without seeing),
You *do* exist and have a being;
And reign, from throne or rocking chair,
Much like that higher King of Air.
Admit you take folks on a mountain,
And try to damn each holy fountain;
That you from walking stick can make
A devilish pretty, living snake;

Can coax the people, two to one
Away from glory straight to ruin.
Admit you own a sulphur bed,
Enough to physic all the dead,
And say you raised the devil so
In this confounded world below,
That Heaven's holy Potentate
Has weighed you down with lasting hate?
(But how in fun can such thing be,
If God is great and good—you see?)
Admit your cloven foot and horns,
Your forked tail and blasted corns—
All, all admit; then squarely tell
How things are managed down in hell?

Are frying pans and pitchforks there,
An awful lake with lurid glare?
Do gudgeons dance and wear a wreath,
Or weep and wail and gnash their teeth?
Tell what your population is,
(You see I'm coming down to "biz,")
And if you are a favored elf,
The rest not faring like yourself?
Do they have politics below,
Where Democrats can gently go?
Where "counting out" smells rank to Heaven,
And hypocrites are not forgiven?
Have you no holidays down there,
All free from punishment and care—
A godly, jolly letting up,
For meditation, drink and sup?
If not I'd hold my devilish breath,
Or brace right up and starve to death!
Give us your geographic bounds;

The cranks have lied so much, by zounds!
(There—call that naughty phrase forgiven—
I ask not *you*, but gracious Heaven—)
One more than half begins to "smell
A mice" about this kingdom—hell,
This undiscovered, smoky land,
Where every hero wears a brand,

Where Paine and Jefferson may be,
And in the end both you and me;
Where Darwin and the Huxleys go,
And Emerson, and Burns and Poe,
Brave Huxley, Hobbes and Ingersoll—
In just a word, both one and all
Who scoff at you and Adam's fall!

"Your Honor," was it ever dreampt
That you must fine me for contempt?
It would be so, for I should cry,
"Yourself and kingdom are a lie!"
Were it not such a turnabout
From what I said at starting out.
But as it is I must proclaim
Your sulphuretic pluck and fame.

Why, what a hero you have been
In fighting for the cure of sin.
You kicked the walls of Eden down,
And turned old Adam on the town.
No hog in any garden got
That more deserved a charge of shot!
For blush, O Satan, when I tell,
The Lord had made it "very well."
And then again you turned the table
By coaxing Cain to slaughter Abel.
No game you ever played was fair
With Him who rules the upper air.

But, Ah Sin-like, you basely cheated,
And so (of course) His grace defeated.
No wonder God threw up his hand
And sent a flood upon the land;
For your infernal, snaky breath,
Had turned immortal life to death.
The beets and cabbage tares became,
Old Noah's oxen all got lame,
(I hardly think you played that game),
Until the storm of vengeance burst,
And everything was roundly curs'd!

Now, Beelzebub, bow low and hark :
Were you not hid in that old ark ?
Or did God help you float or swim,
That you might live to bother Him ?
One thing is sure : you wriggled through,
And head a vast, unnumbered crew :
Your subjects in the heathen lands
Are countless as the drifting sands.
No captain ever led such host—
Ten times the other crowd at most ;
And still they headlong rush to swell
The legions of your kingdom—hell !

O Satan, stop ! your straps resign,
Or give your siege another line.
Remember Babel's awful fate,
And know that only God is great.

LADY MAUD.

I loved a lady, sweet and fair
As angel well could be ;
And Maud had honored, so she said,
And almost worshipped me.
The dream has passed ;
Our love has fled—
Her heart is gay,
But mine is dead.

When Lady Maud like golden sun,
Rose in my lonely sky,
A mid-day glory crowned the earth,
And cherub forms drew nigh.
They hovered low,
Then seemed to flee
Beyond the clouds
From Maud and me.

As whirlwinds sweep the blooming dale,
So passion-storms arose,
And withered all our wedded bliss,
As winter smites the rose.
Will sunshine come,
And clouds depart
To warm again
A frozen heart?

The snow-clad mound may bloom anew,
For seeds beneath but sleep;
Yet stalwart oaks by lightning reft
Are dead, though rooted deep.
So love full grown,
If stabbed will die,
And all the springtime
Showers defy.

The golden bowl is broken, Maud,
Our harp has lost its tune;
For us a long December reigns,
In place of rosy June.
Was it my hand
Which struck the blow,
That smote one heart
With lasting woe?

Beyond the border land of life,
Where death and wedlock cease,
The truth may clasp our hands again,
And whisper love and peace.
Ah, Lady Maud,
All secrets told,
Would show that glitter
Is not gold.

CROWN THE DEAD.

Wreath their graves with floral honors,
Every tomb deserves a crown;
Honor to the sainted heroes
Who died to crush rebellion down.
Silent, solemn be our tread,
As with love we crown the dead.

Gather flowers from the wildwoods;
Violets and lilies fair;
Scatter on the sacred altars
Where our martyred warriors are.
Bowed, uncovered be our head,
As we crown the noble dead.

Brave, heroic souls, undaunted,
Rest beneath this silent sod;
Soldiers from the field of glory,
Children of a living God.
Be it of our nation said,
She ever crowns her honored dead.

Do they sleep beneath our garlands,
In the cold and lifeless clay?
Change, O Love, such dark forebodings,
As the night blooms into day.
Ours no doubt or mystic dread,
As we crown and bless the dead.

Hark! the skies resound with music;
Whispers fall like holy dew,
Telling of a life immortal,
For the noble, good and true.
Gentle, loving be our tread,
As we crown our soldiers dead.

THREE PROFESSIONS.

Two priests shook hands the other day,
(Of course their creeds read the same way) ;
Says number one to number two,
"I celebrate myself! Don't you?
Our camp is pitched high up in life,
Above the rabble with its strife.
Mechanics, merchants, farmers—all
Are very short and we are tall!
The masses kneel to hear us pray,
And not a whisper when we say,
'Ye race of vipers, doomed to woe,
Believe in us or down you go!'"

Says number two to number one,
"Yea, verily, but here's the fun:
The horny-handed, cringing masses,
Don't know that we, like them, are asses.
They boost us on the highest wave,
Because they're bound their souls to save.
But sometimes, brother (this is true),
I fear these mudsills look us through!
But never mind; you hint aright—
The crowd is black and we are white.
For us to either bless or damn;
They take their pork, we have our lamb."

Two doctors stood beside a coffin,
And (blame my eyes!) but both were laughing!
The corpse within looked sad enough,
As if he thought their fun was rough.
Says doctor A to doctor B,
"You killed that chap, but say t'was me,
And when my other patient dies,
You take the blame—just swapping lies.
I never thought a man we dosed
Would make so bad a looking ghost.
The next man either of us hires,
Let's steal his bones to string on wires."

Says doctor B to doctor A,
"You ought not, friend, to joke that way.
Before I treat, just make confession,
Old Phil Bags, is the boss profession!
Suppose we slay by reckless test—
The age ahead, perchance, is blessed?
These folks are poor, but so are we;
Let's make them pay, then split the fee!
But here the mourners sadly come,
We must look wise or cut and run.
I do look down on such a fuss—
Why can't they take it cool, like us?"

Two lawyers from the court-room walked,
Where they had loudly, fiercely talked.
The one was pledged to flog the other,
For calling him a son of—mother!
But when they to a corner came,
They dodged around and played this game:
Says lawyer C to lawyer D,
"I'll tickle you if you will me;
This goose we've got must now be picked—
If you'll divide, I'll play up licked.
The feathers on my little duck
Are hardly worth a lambkin's pluck."
Says lawyer D, then, in reply,
A bargain, Bob! But ain't you dry?
We'll quaff a glass without a spasm,
Then shake across the bloody chasm.
These chaps in humble walks of life
Can't comprehend such deadly strife;
But priests and doctors, lawyers, too,
Are upper-toned and always true.
So let us drink without a grudge,
Then hurry up and buy the judge!"

And thus the "Three Professions" run—
Ye gods and mudsills, ain't it fun!

MORAL.

Love the preachers, pay them well,
Save your humble souls from hell;
Run for doctors ev'ry ache,
Foot the bills and physic take;
Kick up law-suits ev'ry day—
Hurrah! Ye mudsills, "let us prey!"

NEVER GO BACK ON A FRIEND.

There is nothing unmanly about it,
To enter the tussle of life,
With the pluck and the plans of a hero,
Determined to win in the strife.
"Every man for himself" a motto
Compelled by the nature of trade,
Is the practical rule that will guide us,
The way that the world has been made.
So, roll up your sleeves like a Trojan,
And all of your energies bend!
But mind: in the hazzards that follow,
You must never go back on a friend.

There is nothing unmanly about it,
To buy when the markets are low—
To risk half your pile on a margin,
To make or to break on a throw.
Manly venture shows muscle and courage,
Without it the world is a clog—
There is nothing like vigorous traffic
To keep the whole race on a jog.
Then pitch into bank stocks or peanuts,
Puff yourself and your goods to this end—
But mind: in the smash-up that follows,
You must never go back on a friend.

There is nothing unmanly about it,
To flourish in broadcloth or silk;
To sport a fast horse and a carriage,
To live upon honey and milk—
For the spoils belong to the victor,
With the honors and joys they bring,
And the man is as good as a sava
Who sets the bright dollars on wing.
But mind: if a veritable Cræsus,
With mission to hoard or to lend,
Of origin humble or blooded,
You must never go back on a friend.

There is nothing unmanly about it,
To wear a patched boot or a coat,
To labor in honest seclusion,
With poverty clutching your throat;
Your life and your goods may be mortgaged,
Your prospects a labyrinth of gloom—
Cheer up! and refuse to be conquered!
Defy and outwill even doom!
But mind: in the straits and the struggles,
While the darkness and fetters you rend,
No matter how driven or tempted,
You must never go back on a friend.

There is nothing unmanly about it,
To labor and plan for yourself,
To carry off coveted lands,
To struggle for honors and pelf;
For, although it be not poetic,
This doctrine is rigidly true:
If a man would ride on life's billows
He must paddle his own canoe.
So grapple the oar with true mettle!
Never flinch or despair when they bend—
But mind: if afloat or if stranded,
You must never go back on a friend.

THE TALKING OF THE CLOCK.

[Written in the Morton House, Grand Rapids, Mich., in 1880, while sitting in front of the fireplace, with an old clock sitting on the mantel, in the presence of his friends, he, in a few moments, wrote the following] :

Who has ever sat and listened
To the talking of the clock?
Did you ever—doors and windows
Under lock—listen to the ticking,
To the talking of the clock?
Majestic shadows floating 'round you,
Crackling embers burning slow,
With the old clock ticking, ticking,
In such accents, weird and low :
Did you ever sit and listen
To the talking of the clock?

Hark ! I hear the old clock ticking—
Tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick—
Do you hear the solemn sound,
Half as if it came from heaven,
Other half from out the ground?
Tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick—
Do you hear this ticking, ticking,
And this talking of the clock—
Every echo with a meaning,
Every stroke a magic shock,
This ticking and this talking
Of the clock?

Once upon a time I listened,
Listened to the old clock talk,
With the wine-cups scattered 'round me,
Empty wine-cups, drained to mock
Resolves and sorrows fresh and thick,
Sorrows echoed by the old clock
In its doleful tick, tick, tick, tick—

Sat and listened like a monk,
While the old clock said "drunk, drunk,
 drunk, drunk!"
O how many think and walk,
Who can not like an old clock talk.

Then again, with death beside me,
 Sat I solemn and alone,
And the clock upon the mantel
 Had a new and awful tone—
Full of anguish, full of sorrow,
 Was the single word it said—
To my heart that word was spoken—
 "Dead, dead, dead, dead!"
Holy Christian, pious Christian,
 Steadfast as an ocean rock,
Have you ever sat and listened,
 Listened to the talking clock?

Often have I sat and wondered,
 Wondered, shuddered at the tone,
Ev'ry stroke an arrow sharpened,
 Every tick a dying groan!
Other times with heart o'erflowing,
 As the waters from a fount,
Have I heard the old clock ticking,
 Keeping count, count, count, count,
Checking off the golden minutes,
 Filled with pleasure, filled with love,
Every tick a throb of manhood,
 Holy message from above!
O, that ticking, ticking, ticking,
 In the jolly days of youth,
Then the old clock knew no sorrow,
 Only talked of love and truth.

Have you ever sat and listened,
 Listened to the talking clock,
With the shadows thick and heavy,
 Doors and windows under lock?

Small and silent though the voice,
Yet the ticking must be heard—
Ev'ry stroke a magic signal,
Ev'ry tick a potent word!
Clocks are ticking, hearts are beating,
Months and years are flitting by—
*Shall we hear that old clock ticking
On a mantel in the sky?*

“THE LIE”—A NEW VERSION.

[NOTE.—If the heroic martyr, Sir Walter Raleigh, wrote “The Lie” an hour before his noble head lay upon the block, no wonder this immortal poem should be filled with bitterness and defamation. But “The Soul’s Errand” always seemed so black with cynicism that I shall not even ask forgiveness for perpetrating a parody.]

Go, soul, the body’s guest,
Upon a manly trip;
Fear neither wind nor waves—
They can not sink the ship,
Go, brave and strong as youth,
And dare to tell the truth.

Go tell the bench it stands
High up in Christian lands;
Tell Church and State beside
Sir Walter Raleigh lied!
For Court and Church I’m found,
In broadest sense are sound.

And potentates and kings
Are not such beastly things;
Their record, as a whole,
Shows statesmanship and soul;
Exceptions, O thou fool,
Illustrate but the rule.

Must men in "high condition"
Needs merit all, perdition?
Have they such motives low
For lucre, place and show?
All records, low and high,
Give such a stab the lie.

And love and zeal are noble,
Yea, holy and sublime;
The sun and earth may crumble—
Not these through endless time!
To libel them with gabble
Should shame the lowest rabble.

If give the lie thou must,
Say not that "love is lust,"
Nor honor most forgotten,
Nor fame and beauty rotten;
If criticize thou would,
Be just and spare the good.

Is charity a fraud,
And wit and wisdom hollow?
Is virtue but a bog
In which the soul must wallow?
If Satan dare reply
Stand up and give the lie.

Old age, perchance, is "wasting,"
While arts and science fail;
The Wrong sometimes may conquer,
The Right be held for sale:—
But never was a nobler plan
Than life; its king and head—a man.

Sir Raleigh, thus my musings:
Go, soul, and spread them wide;
Let better sense and manhood
Determine who has lied.
Return, O soul, thy errand through,
With faith in all things good and true.

OLD HIGGINS.

Most called him that, but some "Old Jim"—
The "old" was always used—
But Higgins never threw his name,
Or ever felt abused.
The fact is, Jim was rough and old,
And took right smart to drink;
He'd seen most all his friends turn off,
And half his dollars sink.
Besides, to put the worst side out,
Old Higgins swore like sin,
Nor was it easy to count up
The fights that he'd been in.

One time a good old farm was his,
(His wife was then alive),
But after Hannah drooped and died,
Then nothing seemed to thrive.
His fences fell, his flocks died off,
His beard and clothes grew bad,
And pious people said of him,
"Old Hig. is going mad."
And when a mortgage took his farm,
And he worked 'round the town,
It seemed that all went back on Jim
And tried to kick him down.

But here are facts: Old Higgins' debts
Were always promptly paid,
While half his neighbors cheated him
(When tipsy) in their trade.
In spite of that Jim never squealed,
Nor started any muss,
Although they called him all about
"A drunken, fighting cuss."
The fact is, Jim could lick the crowd,
And this quite often did—
"I won't be spit upon," said he,
"Nor kicked about, nor rid."

They'd had a fight the night before,
At Justice Parker's inn,
Where not a single rough came out
Without a bloody skin.
But on this day the row was hushed,
The town was all affright—
That fire up in the northern woods
Had just hove into sight.
The flames with wild-horse speed came on
Toward this fated town,
While 'mong the pines no mortal power
Could crush the demon down.

"Bring out your teams!" Old Higgins yelled,
"And have the women fly;
We'll keep the cussed fire back,
Or on your door-steps die!"
His thunder tones and giant strength
Brought order out of fright,
And all said, "Good! we can't help whip—
Old Higgins's in the fight!"
So babes and mothers soon were safe,
Afloat upon the lake,
While old Jim says, "Come on now, boys,
And spade or bucket take!"

Then on a battle-field of fire,
Those heroes fought for life;
The sky ink-black, the earth ablaze—
Did hell e'er see such strife?
But all in vain: the flames swept on
Like besom from below,
Sent forth by some almighty fiend
To scatter death or woe.
"Run, boys—the lake!" old Higgins howls,
"Go help the women there;
I'll roast before a house shall burn—
I won't be whipped, I swear!"

With hope all gone, his neighbors fled,
Beseeching Jim to come;
But he seemed "Mad, or drunk," they said,
At best, both deaf and dumb!
And there Jim stood, with face to foe,
Foresworn to never yield,
While all the others reached the lake
Across a distant field.
Ye gods of wind and fire, explain!
Say, priests, can this be so?
The wind has changed! That hurricane
Now from the town does blow!

And not a house or barn went down
Before that ocean blaze,
While every man in Huggardstown
For old Jim Higgins prays.
He's thrown up drink and fighting now,
And preaches with a will,
That when the rest had all run off,
A voice said, "Peace—be still!"
And more, Jim says, "I prayed just then,
For I had sworn to die,
And boys, I know that voice came down
From Him who rules on high."

I LOVE.

I love a thing of beauty,
Of sweetness, power and grace
A man with brains and muscle,
A woman's lovely face;
And charms of form and manner,
Which captivate the eye,
As do the stars of heaven,
Winking at us from the sky.

I love a heart when throbbing,
And eyes which fill with tears,
The hand whose grasp is warming
In the winter time of years,
And passions deep and lasting
As the fountain spring of life,
Which melt in times of sorrow,
And freeze in times of strife.

I love a deathless courage
That scorns to break or quail,
And manly health and spirit
Which knows no word like fail,
And hate and love incarnate,
When guided by the soul,
Which break in mighty billows
And down the passions roll.

I love the ocean billows,
And mountains, rough and high,
Which stand, with heads uncovered,
In the temples of the sky.
And night with all its visions,
And days of care and toil,
Which plant in man a purpose,
As oaks root in the soil.

I love the rod that chastens,
And a heart that can forgive,
A soul which aches for others,
And bids a brother live,
And words and deeds of manhood,
Regardless of their source,
Which sweep away our sorrows
Like a river in its course.

I love the earth beneath me,
The heavens spread above;
O let us love *each other*,
For God himself is love.

TO THE COMET.

Great zounds! old Comet, they do tell
You're bound to knock us into—well,
Say smithereens or printers' pi.
What right have you in our sky,
To flap about that mighty tail,
Like some gigantic solar whale—
The one that swallowed Jonah, say?
You'd better steer another way,
And gobble some one else's sun—
Their system might enjoy the fun.

Now, Mr. Comet, just be fair,
Who shot you through our peaceful air?
Are you on a flying revel,
Guided by the very devil,
Or is your mission all divine?
At any rate your tail is fine!
I vow, you must be twenty-one—
A dangerous fellow 'round the sun.

A "rover" say the learned men:
Pray tell us where you've always been!
Are you upon an endless spree?
That sort of life would tickle me,
If I could "bum it" through the sky,
And always keep politely high;
By running off the lawful track,
And giving other worlds a whack—
That aint my style when even "tight"—
Give me a free and harmless fight.

Who made you, Comet, anyway,
And led you first to go astray?
Was it Judge Harris? Sue him then,
And make him foot the bill again.
It's sad to think you may be lost—
Just claim ten thousand and the cost,
The moon or stars will go his bail,
If not—well, thereby hangs your tale.

I wish that candle would fall off,
And then remain as now aloft,
A sample for the realms of space—
For all the blasted comet race.
Do you take envy in such things,
Your speed, or plume, or lurid wings?
If so, as weighed by human ken,
You prototype us wicked men.
I'd rather be a little star,
And "twinkle, twinkle from afar."
True honor men or comets earn,
By being good. To fly or burn,
Or trespass on some stellar sphere,
And make old women shake with fear,
Did not a chap in glory robe
When I was a celestial globe.

Perhaps this is your bridal trip,
As through the boundless air you skip:
Have you beheld a mighty throne,
Or angel-choir with pious tone?
Don't blush or hesitate to tell—
Was it your luck to sail through hell?
Your rambles must have been so wide
(Unless befuddled by your bride)
You ought to know each zone up there,
And all the gods or fiends of air.
I wish I could such tour take
And gaze upon that "burning lake,"
Or get a glimpse of Paradise,
Where saints reside, as snug as mice.
Such realms must be, unless King James
Should dump his version in the flames.
I rather like your devilish speed,
The way you dash and take the lead.
Cannot a race be well got up?
I'll hold the stakes or golden cup.
It would be hard for you to fail,
If you would let us trim your tail.

Suppose you dare to strike our sun—
Would he hit back, or set, or run?

To throw all nonsense now aside,
If you must fight, I want to hide.
Astronomers may scout the vision,
It will come up—a chance collision!
We know in ages long gone by
They've had such rackets in the sky.
The surface of old earth itself
Shows it was once knocked on the shelf.
Our polar regions then were tropic,
If men can comprehend the topic.
And why not, pray, such stellar crashes?
The cyclone on a city dashes,
Volcanoes mighty nations drown,
And earthquakes swallow islands down—
Deny, O Nature, if you dare,
That accidents are everywhere.
Because ten thousand years have passed,
Wherein like clockwork, first and last,
The stars have run, it does not prove
They cannot make an awkward move.
But let's look on and watch the fun
And stake our pile upon the sun.
Old Sol is yet the god of day,
And any comet that may sway
Or reel about in tipsy flight,
And try to cloud his welcome light,
Will raise a patriotic gale
That may blow off its worthless tail.

LITTLE AND GREAT

A careless farmer sowed his field
With seeds not cleanly milled;
The tares and thistles soon sprung up,
And all his acres filled.
The winds of autumn bore the down,
And noxious germs were spread,
Till all the fields throughout that town
Were fouled the reapers said.

A single weed a thoughtless hand
Had planted far and near,
A plague which proved a blighting brand,
And spread from year to year.

A reckless trapper spaded deep
His burrowed game to seize;
The Mississippi quickly rose
And threatened her levees.
Alas! that trapper's fatal spade!
The bank just there gave way,
And soon the roaring maddened flood
No mortal power could stay.
The frightened waters spread adown,
Like bison scourged with fire,
While Neptune laughed with fiendish glee,
At such destruction dire.

A moral leper lisped a word
In Virtue's childish ear;
Indelible the thought inspired,
And blasted a career.
From lip to lip, from touch to touch,
The hellish thought flew by,
Till like the phantom of a sun
It rode the moral sky.

At last a thousand people blushed,
Or hung the guilty head—
A thousand lives all wrecked and crushed
From what that leper said.

Ah, little things! you still are great
For either good or ill:
A blessing or a curse the fate
Which bends us to your will.

MY BETS.

If betting is considered bad,
My bets would make nobody mad,
For all the wagers that I stake,
Are solely risked for conscience's sake.
I bet with brains and thoughts unsold,
And *not* with cords or stacks of gold.
And first, this wager straight I put :
That *betting* is the very root
Of all we hope, and think, and do—
I guess and bet, and so do you !
Our *lives* are games of risk and chance ;
While Fortune fiddles we nimbly dance,
Not knowing when the time will end,
Nor if our partner be a *friend*.
Or rather life, like whist or bluff,
Turns all on *luck*—'tis smooth or rough ;
The man who holds a winning hand
And shuffles next, may sometimes stand—
Or rather *sit* beside his stack,
And from the bottom turn a jack !
But where the odds ? Or what afford ?
The deal that follows sweeps the board !

But this aside. If gamblers we,
Or saintly fruit upon some tree
Deep rooted in eternity—
It matters not, for life's a *play* ;
'Tis up and down, 'tis night and day—
A game of chance, a bet, a throw,
A paradox of bliss and woe,
A weather-cock hard blown by Fate,
A comedy of love or hate,
A stage whereon we ape our parts,
A lottery of brains and hearts—
And such is life. So mote it be !
And now for bets twixt you and me :

I'll bet Creation is a guess!
The more we think we know the less
How suns and planets first were made,
Why systems born too quickly fade,
Or what the power of mind or soul
Which hurled them on an endless roll.
Just this we know: Vast worlds exist—
The rest is shrouded in a mist.

Astronomers and Moses, hey?
Upon yon shelf they peaceful lay;
And Gulliver close by is found—
All three in proper *calf* are bound.
The fact is this: some *laws* are known;
The circuit of these orbs are shown,
The space between, the distance through—
Such facts are neither old nor new,
But *in* them knowledge only lies
Of worlds unnumbered in the skies.

But take our earth—that's room enough,
The other bet was sheerest stuff;
Nor does it pay to taunt the schools,
Or argue much with learned fools,
Let Saturn go, and Venus too,
This globe's enough for me and you.

I'll bet no saint or savon knows
If earth was born, or if it grows,
Nor nebular or other plan
Does any way account for man.
The oceans—whence their fearful source?
The lightning—who directs its course?
Vast gold and silver buried deep—
Who forged the lock or key does keep
To all these secrets hid away
Within the rocks beneath the clay?
Much more, the forests vast and dark,
The beasts of prey, the wolf, the shark,
And life too small for eyes to ken,
And over *all*, ye God-like men—
Whence come ye? And how? And why?
And what portends these words—*to die?*

I'll bet the dead have never spoke!
That Gabriel, yet, has never woke
A single corpse, or fish, or beast,
To join him in some sightless feast.
If spirits *live*, what form have they?
And why this silence, night and day
For countless ages—ah! for aye?
What size, perchance, a human soul?
Its color, weight, its size, its goal?
And where are they we mourn as dead?
(Not caring what the saints have said.)
I put it straight, nor shirk, nor screen—
A spirit form was never seen!
And if they *live*, O where, pray tell?
Nor prate of Heaven nor of Hell—
Such terms are vague, sheer verbal myth,
Devoid of reason, sense or pith.
The telescope finds no such place
Well crowded with a ghastly race;
No throne is found, nor sulphur lake
To cause mankind to cringe or quake.
Some *knowledge* we, not Chaldee lore,
Of things beyond the stygian shore.
O countless dead, we cry to thee,
To tell us of Eternity!
Unlock thy doors! revolt! proclaim
To man thy home, its name!
But echo only answers back,
And doubt grows sombre, *inky-black!*

And last, I'll bet this life is good
To them who strike it as they should.
The slave fares ill, the coward too,
And men who rush existence through,
While wrong may often get the start,
And rack the world from brain to heart.
I think, perchance, this rule is sound;
The fox is better than the hound;
And yet full often in the chase
He falls a victim in the race.
I don't say merit *always* wins,
That misery is yoked to sins,

The record of a wicked past
Explodes that error at a blast!
Yet noble things, upright and pure,
Bring happiness—'tis almost sure—
Except as Fate may on some frown,
And curse and choke their goodness down.
The wisest path that man has seen
Is found within the golden mean,
And if afoot, or if on ride,
'Tis ill to wander either side.

Old world, I hug thee to my heart!
From thee I'd never, never part.
Upon this dreamy, balmy day
Upon thy bosom let me lay,
And as our hearts beat throb with throb,
Like some lost child I can but sob
To think that those we buried deep,
Within thy breast must endless sleep!
It may not be. O let us hope—
Give Faith the rein and Fancy scope;
For dark, indeed, the path ahead,
With those we love forever dead.

MY SHOES.

Whatever may be the material,
(No matter if coarsest or fine)
These shoes that I walk in are fitted—
Thank God, old brogans, you're mine!
I wear you with comfort and freedom,
All the same if moulded of glass—
Cinderilla may dance in her slipper,
My shoes were not made on that last.

An old saw runs after this manner:
"Whom the coat fits, let him put it on;"
I believe in this rule for the pedals,
From the clod-hopper up to the ton.

No two wear identical sizes,
Without one endangers a corn,
Because Nature's moulds are varied—
No complete twins were yet ever born.

My shoes, then!—or is it barefooted
One must quadrille or march to the fife,
Which plays at the van of existence,
On the highway of immortal life?
Well, let it be naked all over—
(This might be the best way—who knows?)
At all odds, fig leaves would be better
Than wearing another man's clothes.

Our shoes have their soles—(have our bodies?
The words are not spelled just the same),
One must order and own all his garments,
Else blush, when he meets you, with shame.
We can't walk the paths of religion
In old theological boots,
Except as we might preach a sermon
In Chaldee or Hebraic roots.

Wear your shoes, man, if calf-skin or stoga,
Your gait will be natural then;
You will be just what Nature intended—
A man among millions of men.
But put on the sandals of others,
To ape them in fashion or walk,
And you'll stagger or limp through existence,
Attempting creation to balk.

Wherever our pathway may lead us,
On sacred or secular ground,
Let every man tread like a hero—
As if a new species were found.
His raiment will always then fit him,
The leather the coarsest or fine—
I swear that I never will travel
In shoes that are other than mine!

MY BOYS.

A couple of frolicsome fellows,
Just able to toddle about;
Just learning to laugh and to frolic,
To prattle, to sing and to shout;
With eyes that sparkle with mischief,
With dimples on knuckle and chin,
Unconscious of sickness or sorrow,
Unruffled by trouble or sin;
Their lives a morning of pleasure,
An image of beauty and trust,
All sparkling with lustre and glory,
Like diamonds fresh born from the dust—
O, what so fitting from Heaven,
To honor and sanctify life,
As boisterous, musical children,
Angelical gifts from a wife?

They call me "dear papa" at morning,
They sleep on my pillow at night—
The world would be darkness without them,
My darlings, my rubies so bright!

I wonder how people can envy
A beautiful baby its life?
How gifts so directly from Heaven
Engender both hatred and strife?
Thank heaven and women for children!
To them be all the praise—
God bless every wife that's a mother,
To lengthen and gladden her days!

My boys! my cherubs! my beauties!
I sing you this song of the heart;
May our fortunes be blended together,
May death never tear us apart!
I watch by your crib as you slumber,
And I pray to the angels above,
That God will be good to my darlings,
And lead them in wisdom and love.

IRISH MAG.

You never knew "Red-headed Mag,"
That worked for Farmer Brown?
Well, I do, boys, and so does God,
And all of Plainfield town.

She got two dollars (once) a week;
She now controls a farm,
And every Sunday walks to church
On Deacon Farwell's arm.

And why this change? I'll spin the yarn,
In homely style, may be;
But then the facts tell just as well
With folks like you and me.

Pine Island Lake is "mighty deep,"
So all old settlers swear,
And all the Plainfield farmers hold
Their harvest picnics there.

The shores were crowded on that day,
And long the tables spread,
While 'mong the lasses gathered there
Was she with auburn head.

Some turned their noses, played up proud,
'Cause Mag had Irish blood,
And wore plain clothes and solid shoes
For table work and mud.

Ah! never mind my plump colleen—
They blush to own it now,
And wish their names were sung like yours,
By farmers at the plow.

Now, Deacon Farwell led in prayer,
Before the feast was had,
And little Bob, his cherub boy,
Stood close beside his dad.

Because his mother was not there—
He never saw her face;
Before his chubby feet could trot
She'd run her earthly race.

But when the music had begun,
Bob climbed into a skiff,
And Abel Scott, a roguish brat,
Just pushed the thing adrif'!

"Jump out! jump out!" a dozen yelled,
But none did wade to him,
And even Farwell, too, held back,
Because he couldn't swim.

While farther drifted out that skiff—
With fifty shouting mad,
And little Bob a holding on
And crying, "Help me, dad!"

The women cried, the men looked on,
(That was the only boat)
While not a soul in all the crowd
But what on Bob did dote.

Say, did you ever see a breeze
That seemed to spring from hell?
One struck that dizzy skiff broadside—
I shudder yet to tell—

And over went a father's hope,
Not six rods from the shore,
While half a dozen men plunged in
Who never swam before!

But Irish Mag, she loved that boy,
Nor cared for waters deep;
She'd bought him many a costless toy,
And kissed him oft to sleep.

Then Mag could swim, God bless her, boys!
Her clothes she quickly threw,
And ankles plump and shoulders white
Came boldly into view!

"Hold on the boat!" she screamed to Bob—
"O heavens! can't he hear?"
"He sinks!—he's lost!" the father cries,
But Mag was drawing near!

Her red hair floats upon the waves,
Her breath comes loud and fast,
"O God, help Mag! she's on the spot
Where Bob went down the last!"

And now she sinks! or did she dive?
A hundred hold their breath,
But not a man or woman there
But thinks that scene is death.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! They both come up!"
And Bob is lifted high!
While all upon that picnic shore
Shout loud, or pray or cry.

She blushed when climbing on the shore,
But noble women there
Threw on her clothes and kissed her lips,
And combed her Irish hair.

And Deacon Farwell—where is he?
A kneeling on the sod,
And calling blessings on that girl,
And thanking her, and God.

Now, farmer Brown has lost his help,
While Bob a mother boasts;
Her hair was red, her heart was good,
Let's bless the Lord of Hosts.

And Plainfield town will honor Mag,
Despite the great display
Her ankles and her shoulders made
Upon that picnic day.

IS THERE NO HELL?

Let Ingersoll and Beecher tell
"There is no hell!" I know it well,
They lie! There is a hell.
It burns within the human breast,
In brains which neither sleep nor rest,
In conscience seared and hopes o'erthrown,
In death, in sin, in every groan:—
Yes, hell there is, and hot and real
To them that know and think and feel.

There is a hell! In cursed shame,
In passions wild, in blasted name,
In idle hours, and years misspent,
In aims unmet and morals rent;
No sulphur region down below
Has deeper pain or blacker woe
Than hell on earth—the hell of thought,
Which puts all other hells at nought.

There is a hell! And men are damned!
With iron gates upon them slammed,
Their souls in torture cry to God
To lift from them his burning rod!
Can brimstone fires more terror bring
Than does this mental adder-sting?
Ye priests avaunt! Let Hades go—
The heart and head are hells of woe.

Can Heaven with its holy light
Illume the darkest moral night?
Can fires of torment quenched be
By faith and hope, O God in Thee?
Kind angels, haste with lightning wing,
And to the damned some message bring!
O throw ajar those gates of night,
And flood the world with saving light!

PROGRESS: GEOLOGY IN VERSE.

Men and women, never doubt it,
Earth is destined to improve;
Argue as we may about it,
All things have an upward move.

Time is making people better,
Ev'ry age is growing wise;
Right is breaking every fetter,
Wrong before oblivion flies.

Church and State are like improving
Social forms and legal ways—
All from ancient night are moving
Toward the dawn of brighter days.

Science tells a gladsome story
Of this upward march we've made.
How our footsteps lead to glory,
That through time shall never fade.

Earth was once a blazing comet,
Flying through this dismal sky,
Without man or beast upon it,
As the ages floated by.

Even grass and trees were missing;
Fish and birds were all unknown;
Roaring flames the earth were kissing,
God had not the harvest sown.

Years unnumbered rolled before us
Ere the waters gained the strife,
Ere our Mother Earth that bore us,
Nursed the lower forms of life.

But the mystic seeds were sowing,
As the strata-rocks were laid,
And the angel, Time, was hoeing
Ev'ry tender, shooting blade.

Geologic eras vanished;
Nature more prolific grew;
Lower forms of life were banished
For the higher and the new.

Reeds and flags the marshes border;
Creeping things progression prove;
Reptiles of a higher order
In the grand procession move.

Giant trees in wild profusion
Garland earth in waving bloom;
Virgin birds in sweet seclusion
Warble forth their natal tune.

Whales like islands float the ocean;
Mighty herds rush o'er the land;
Creeping mammals change their motion
And, like babes, essay to stand.

Then it was that cycles followed
In the Great Creator's plan,
That will evermore be hallowed
By the advent of a man.

Nature's cradle rocks its master;
Time, the angel, hovers nigh,
While the upper march grows faster,
As the "golden ages" fly.

Lo, the stars are singing loudly;
Swaddling clothes from youth are
hurled;
Man walks forth, erect—and proudly,
Master of the rolling world!

Brutes no longer rule supremely;
Mammoth beasts astonish gaze;
Man surveys his work serenely,
Then his plan of action lays.

Now begins the work eternal,
Ev'ry age has helped along,
Raising men to realms supernal,
From the curse of primal wrong.

Leaves of fig and skins of beaver
Robe the lordling of the skies,
(Humble Adam starts a weaver,
Up the finer arts to rise.)

Knives of flint, and spears of maple,
Spoons of bone, and bowls of wood—
These in trade become the staple
Merchant Adam thinks is good.

Tropic climes are far too sunny—
Cozy huts must now be made;
Help is not "for love or money"—
Adam starts another trade.

So by steps that must be taken,
Science creeps into the world;
Error from his throne is shaken—
Headlong down the ages hurled:

Now the human race increases—
Many tribes spread o'er the land,
Primal peace forever ceases—
Envy rules each warlike band.

Cruel wars are arts infernal
Side by side together spring;
Nations mock the Great Eternal,
And their darts and missiles fling.

But such steps must all be taken—
Man is yet a child of night;
Latent powers will only waken
In the strife of wrong with right.

Flint and steel must strike together,
Ere the porous woods ignite;
Storms no less than sunny weather,
Give the giant oak its might.

Action makes the muscle stronger,
Though exerted for the wrong;
So these tribes are weak no longer,
But, for heathens, wise and strong.

Customs change and notions settle;
Savage clans religion know;
Gods are made from shining metal,
Tears are shed for human woe.

Prophets come with words from Heaven;
Poets tune their harps of gold;
Laws by hoary sage are given,
Solemn tales by priests are told.

Progress climbs the distant mountain,
Time, the angel, floats above;
Knowledge sips the magic fountain,
Heaven bathes the earth in love.

Science claps her hands with joy!
Forests fall and cities rise;
Sons of earth with lightnings toy—
Man invades the very skies!

Stars are counted, worlds are measured,
Suns and systems brought to view;
Right above the might is treasured;
Old is buried for the new.

Seas are crossed, new lands discovered,
Kingdoms laid and nations found;
"Eden bliss" almost recovered,
As the ages roll around.

Thus the "stony book" revealeth
Records of the growing past—
How the strength of manhood stealeth
On the infant race at last;

How the Hosts of Life Eternal
In one grand procession rise
To the realms of love supernal,
Far above the azure skies.

Reason, Virtue, Love and Duty
(Cherubs from the womb of Time)
Beckon to this Land of Beauty
In that high and holy clime.

Men and women, cease to prattle
Of the "Golden Ages" fled—
Up, and wage a manly battle
For the Golden Age ahead!

THE GIRL THAT'S TALKED ABOUT.

The best tree in the orchard,
Is always clubbed the most :
So men with brains are slandered,
By the reckless, jealous host.
This rule is not for ladies,
(Now please don't frown or pout)
There's something wrong or careless,
With the girl that's talked about.

Proud man was placed by nature,
In the van of worldly strife;
Not so of fragile maiden,
Or even buxom wife.
The vine and oak illustrate—
The man a hero stout;
But she resembles neither,
The girl that's talked about.

A brazen miss or madam,
May laugh suspicion down,
Or purchase empty praises,
With wealth or queenly gown;
But who would have a sister,
Wear a veil of mystic doubt?
Have her known upon the street as
The girl that's talked about?

Sound pride and independence,
Are brave in man or woman,
And jollity will bubble forth
From every fount that's human;
But all may tell the wanton jade,
Her vulgar stare or shout,
And know why she is lightly called
"The girl that's talked about."

If Cæsar's wife should be above
Suspicion of all men,
Should not the daughters that we love,
Our angel sisters, when,
Upon the street or in the gaze
Of either king or lout,
They may be classed with hoidens—
The girls they talked about?

All honor to the modest maid
With dignity and pride!
Of her no villains ever scoffed,
Or idle gossips lied.
Her grace and purity above
The shadow of a doubt—
If high or lowly be her walk,
She's never talked about.

'TIS NOBLE AND BRAVE TO GET UP.

Few people have always been standing
Since Adam and Eve took a fall;
And the Lord ought to snatch up to heaven
Such as never have stumbled at all.
Why, Jacob high up on his ladder,
And David with Uriah's wife,
King Solomon, fearfully married,
And Moses with blood on his knife—
Even Noah in the ark with his bottle,
And Jonah from the mouth of his whale,
Could look back on their frolics and follies
And tell a most horrible tale.
Then, outside of Biblical heroes,
Our modern great men have been down;
Been down with their ermine and laurels,
Been down with their women and wine,
Been down into hell and its sorrows
In the flush of their manhood and prime.
But shame on the world that has fallen!
And shame on the people that fall!
Only God can forgive us frail mortals,
And comfort and strengthen us all.
But here is a motto to lean on,
For it sweetens the bitterest cup—
However unmanly the falling,
'Tis noble and brave to get up.

This old world is fearfully shaky,
From a Christian and critical view;
But even the gods would have mercy,
If they only suspected or knew
All the charms and traps of the devil
To lure and swindle mankind—
To fire the soul of a mortal,
And shackle the wrists of the mind!
But man unto man is the censor;
And woe to the creature that's down!
He's the target of envy and malice,
He's the scamp and the rake of the town.

His heart and his head may be "level,"
His business well settled and good,
His wife and his children his idols,
His home all he makes it, or could;
But as tigers pounce on their victims,
No matter how harmless the prey,
So wolves in sheep's clothing will gambol
And bleat a man's standing away.
His faults become huge as the mountains;
His virtues are buried from sight;
His prospects are lied into darkness
By praise which is blacker than night.
Yet here again comes in that motto
To sweeten the bitterest cup:
However unmanly the falling,
'Tis noble and brave to get up.

Few men are so very prophetic,
But all of us know how to guess;
Let us speak, then, for those that are fallen,
Ourselves and our fellows to bless;
The heel of a man that is risen
Shall tread on that venomous foe,
Who, with means which God has forbidden,
Would cover a brother with woe,
By slanders and sympathy hollow,
Which bandies one's faults with his name,
And makes of his stumbling and sorrows
A basis of ruin and shame.
God measures a man by his manhood,
And not by the slang of the street,
Nor the tea which he has on his table,
Nor the cut or the cook of his meat.
And when a man tends to his business,
And fights all his battles to win,
If he has been a little unsteady
It's not such a damnable sin!—
A post will stand upright to heaven
And never go off on a lark,
But where is the heart in its bosom,
Or the veins to enliven its bark?

So let us all cling to this motto,
To sweeten humanity's cup,
However unmanly the falling,
'Tis noble and brave to get up.

Old Rum is more than a heathen—
Let's call him the devil, and done;
And wine is the fork on his candle,
And lager his juvenile son.
But shades of a Webster defend us!
Bobby Burns will stand at the gap!
Lord Byron will roll in his meters,
And Beecher will please take a nap!
Our motto shall not be one-sided—
Let us shoot at the target of truth,
Not caring so much for the old ones,
But anxious to miss all the youth:—
Getting up in the world may be noble,
Never falling, however, is best;
So don't take a pattern from David,
Nor Porson, nor—well, all the rest—
But keep all your heads on a level,
Love God on a generous plan,
Be honest, be upright, keep sober—
To sum it all up, be a man!
However, forget not this motto,
It may sweeten humanity's cup,
If you happen to fall or to stumble,
It is manly and brave to get up.

AN INQUIRY.

I wonder if ever the angels come
From their mystical home in the sky,
To soften a blow and to heal a wound,
Or over our sorrows to sigh.

I wonder if death has a door to unlock
At the bidding of spirits divine,
A door to the realms of the lost and the dead,
Where the lights of eternity shine

It has seemed at times in the still of night
I have heard the flapping of wings,
And whispering low in the sombre air
Have told me of wonderful things.
Can it be that the blessed are free to come
And visit the ones that they love,
And then return to their golden home
In the mystic skies above?

Little hands have pressed my aching brow ;
Ah! once I remember well—
They were clasped in mine and a voice said,
“Come away from the gates of hell!”
Is it all a dream and a myth of faith—
These weird and shadowy things?
Can angels flit through the boundless space,
With the speed of immortal wings?

In legends of old we oft have read
Of fairies, sprites and gnomes:
Were these not souls of the lost and gone,
Strayed away from their shadow-homes?
I dream as I write of a higher life
Beyond this vale of tears,
A fairy land with sunlit skies,
Foretold by the ancient seers.

The mist clears up and the vision fades,
And doubts come flooding in,
But I feel those hands and I hear that voice
In the gloom of all earthly din.
Is an unseen world our goal at last?
Do the angels hover nigh?
Shall we meet to love and part no more,
In the golden, boundless sky?

AN HONORARY SALUTE.

To Colonel A. T. McReynolds, formerly Brevet Major of the Third U. S. Dragoons, in the War with Mexico, and Colonel of the First Cavalry, and the only Volunteer Colonel of Cavalry, commissioned by President Lincoln in the late War.

Hail! Old warrior—statesman—man!
You're pluck from rind to core—
A hero, battle-scarred and sound
At seventy years and four!
I greet you proud; and, hat in hand,
Propose three rousing cheers,
To him who honors Michigan
In patriotic years.

Upon that field—Chapultepec,
And gory Monterey,
Along with Scott, the veteran,
You always won the day!
While you and Kearney, side by side,
Old Mexico defied,
And equaled even Sheridan,
In many a gallant ride.

Oh, Time! Turn back your golden wheels,
And bring again to view,
Our olden chiefs and patriots,
Forever brave and true!
In wars and councils hear again,
Their oracles proclaim,
Of deeds of valor, sanctified
Upon the scroll of fame!

What though our modern days are rife,
With laurels cheaply won?—
The days which tried men's souls were passed,
Before our race begun!

So, while a soldier lives and breathes,
It never shall be said,
We honored not our living chiefs,
An ancient statesman, dead.

One war enough. Its shots and shells,
Such fame and havoc wrought,
That ev'ry scar should be a crown,
To them who bravely fought.
But no! When treason broke her chains,
And tore the old flag down,
You grasped anew the trusty sword,
And donned a soldier's gown.

And rebel Southern felt the blade,
Old Santa Ana feared,
As Northern millions clapped their hands,
And at your valor cheered!
And when the banner once again,
Above our Nation waved,
You laid your shield and buckler down
Before our temples saved.

All honor, then, oh Colonel, friend!—
For others, too, I speak—
Not selfish praise or worldly gain,
My muse would scorn to seek!
Your good right arm and cloudless brain,
Are loyal as before,
Nor show the marks of time or pain,
In seventy years and four.

Your wounds God healed! and fresh and young
That heart will ever beat,
For Liberty and noble deeds,
And acts of mercy sweet.
Nor on the field, nor at the bar,
Or in forensic tilt,
Can younger hands such dagger grasp,
And drive it to the hilt!

So be this, then, our last salute,
And loudly, proudly given :
Your budding honors earned on earth,
Shall blossom full in Heaven!

THE DEVIL IS DEAD.

The devil is dead :—O horrible news!
But it rings from the East to the West;
The saintly kneel down in their sorrowful pews,
While the worldly thank God for a rest!

The devil is dead :—Ah, Beecher and “Bob,”
But a short time ago he was well—
How could you the Church so cruelly rob,
By kicking the bottom from hell!

The devil is dead :—Hell’s gates are ajar,
The sunlight of Heaven pours in;
The chains are all broke—not an imp wears a yoke—
For dead is the father of Sin.

The devil is dead :—And such men as Paine,
And Buckle, and Hume, and Voltaire,
Will suddenly rise to seats in the skies,
The blessings of Heaven to share.

The devil is dead :—He was knocked on the head
By Knowledge, who never would yield;
But long was the fight twixt Folly and Right,
And bloody the terrible field.

The devil is dead :—So away with the “fall!”
We will rise on a natural plan,
With God at the head (now the devil is dead)
And Science the saviour of man.

HANNAH AND I HAVE TALKED.

[Written at home the first night that the author found himself under the influence of liquor.]

We sat up late together, with our darlings sleeping nigh,
When Hannah, behind her sewing, gave a deep and
smothered sigh;

So soft, it seemed she whispered, and I turned to catch
the word,

But her face was hidden from me, while a deeper sigh I
heard,

Then my arms were thrown around her and I kissed away
her tears,

The first she had shed in sorrow in all our married years;
For Hannah, so hale and jolly, has danced our wedlock
through,

And never would blame or scold me, nor ever was cross
or blue.

So, quick we were locked together, in silent, long em-
brace,

My heart in a throb of anguish, her tears upon my face;
And there, with the boys near us, I knelt by Hannah's
side,

And asked with keen misgivings why the wife of my
bosom cried.

Ah, it came like a crash of thunder from a cloudless sky
o'erhead,

When the girl I had wedded kissed me, and softly, kindly
said:

"Our boys lie sleeping yonder, except little Frank, you
know,

Whom we placed in his grave so sadly beneath the banks
of snow;

Dear husband you'll forgive, but I could not help but
think,

It would break my heart and kill me if our boys should
ever drink."

Then I looked upon our darlings, so ruddy, sweet and
brave,
And I thought of little Frankie in his cold and silent
grave,
And I said to Hannah, frankly, "Do you think my habits
bad?"
But she answered, "kiss me darling," while her tones
were low and sad.

Again we fell to musing, while I held her close and strong,
Impressed if Hannah said it there was something going
wrong,
For wives, if true and noble, will quickly, surely tell,
When a husband turns from heaven to catch a glimpse of
hell.
And it came upon me sudden, these were not our olden
days—
I had gone to law from farming, had changed in many
ways;
From cider in the cellar it had come to sparkling wine,
And once dear Hannah shuddered when she put her lips
to mine;
Then sometimes, but not often, she had waited late at
night,
While I was at the office (as I told her), "stayed to write."
And such things flashed upon me as the silence deeper
grew,
And that Hannah ought to chide me, I keenly, sadly knew;
We husbands often frolic without the fear of harm,
When a wife can see the danger and hears the first alarm.
So I said again to Hannah—and my voice would tremble
some,
"If you think it best, my darling, *I will taste no more of
rum.*"
Then Hannah knelt beside me with a sunny, happy face,
And said "Amen" devoutly before the Throne of Grace;
And hand in hand together, we kissed each cherub boy,
With a rainbow in our heavens and our hearts brimful of
joy.

And those bottles in the cellar with cobwebs covered o'er,
Shall stand but to remind us of the dangers gone before;
And Malc., and little Alen, and the baby sleeping nigh,
Shall never know why Hannah gave that deep and smothered sigh.

MARRY ME.

Marry me, marry me, blessings of life,
Come to my arms as coveted wife;
Fortunes angelic, Virtues discreet,
Manhood ennobled, kneels at your feet.

Charity, robed in your garments of light—
May not our nuptials be published to-night?
Mercy—O maiden with sweetness divine!
Shall not our souls in affection entwine?

Hygiene, with cheeks and with lips coral red,
Blush at me, rush at me, darling and wed—
Riches, thou belle of the ball and the street,
Flirt not, but marry the knight at your feet.

Fame, with your laurels won as a crown;
Beauty, whose charms mirror forth through
 your gown;
Honor and Justice, buxom and bold,
With bracelets of iron and ear-rings of gold.

Intellect, queen of your ravishing sex,
Whom lust cannot conquer nor jealousy vex;
Love, holy vestal, fairer than all,
With temples before which the gods even fall!

O marry me, marry me, angel of bliss,
No priest for our wedlock, nor troth for a kiss;
But such be the marriage, and thus be the ban—
A union of virtues in woman and man.

GOOD OLD-FASHIONED MEN.

—
We won't go back to Adam,
Nor yet so far as Paul;
Not even to Columbus—
(No doubt such ancients all
Were saints or something better,
As folks were measured then;)
We sing for other heroes—
Those "good old-fashioned men."

The bards across the waters,
May herald forth the fame
Of kings and queens, or bishops—
What signifies a name?
There's nothing in a title,
Or honors that are born;
True men should earn their laurels,
As the garments they have worn.

Just plain old Ethan Allen,
Or Putnam, won more rights
By their daring deeds of valor,
In their helter-skelter fights,
Than lords or dukes of England,
Her kinghts or pompous peers,
Brought forth by honest labor,
In full a thousand years.

What made our Patrick Henry,
And Washington and Wayne,
Rout those vaunting Britishers
As the ministers, Tom Paine?
Old-fashioned pluck was in them,
Their heads and hearts were level,
They honored truth and freedom,
Nor feared the very devil.

No silken robes or scepter,
Nor gaudy feathers then
Decked the heroes of a nation—
Those good old-fashioned men.
Plain and rough their garments,
And frank and bold their ways,
As they battled for their country,
In those early, bloody days.

Oh, shades of the departed!
What contrast do we see.
Take that Continental Congress,
With its chieftains true and free,
Then turn and gaze at Washington
As it is in Eighty-two,
And blush to think our Government
Depends on such a crew!

Forget that Burr and Arnold,
Were suffered to exist;
Where else were clouds or shadows,
Or even fleeting mist
Upon the sky of freedom,
In that age of manhood, when
The rulers of the Nation were—
Those good old-fashioned men?

I honor old Dan Webster,
And Jefferson and Clay!
They beat the knaves and partizans
That run our land to-day.
“Old Hickory,” too, and Harrison,
And Franklin—noble Ben!
They all belong high in my song—
Those good old-fashioned men!

Those “stalwarts,” “cranks” and
“half-breeds,”
And democrats as well;
Or they that howl of greenbacks—
Let any party tell—

Among those modern leaders,
Who walk beneath the sun
With record right and honor bright
Like sainted Washington?

Roll on! oh, wheels of progress, roll!
But take a sudden turn,
And in the realm of politics,
Some little glory earn.
My muse shall sing your praises all,
In hallelujahs, when
Our Halls of Congress shall be filled
With "good old-fashioned men."

WICKED BILL.

Swear? I rather guess he would,
As if old Kidd had reared him!
But, somehow, when the "gray-coats"
Saw Bill's bearded face and heard
His awful oaths, they feared him.
"Let Bill lead on the charge!" cried
Captain Bradford, who was shot,
"He'll go through every Reb,
And send them where 'tis hot!"
Then another volley came,
And brave Sergeant Weston fell;
Bill looked into his dying face,
And said, "We'll give the traitors hell!"
"Come, boys, at them, every man!
We must be one to ten—
Let's whip the cussed rebels,
Or die like fighting men!"
Thus speaking, on he led us,
Not a soldier turning back,
Where the bullets flew like hailstones,
When the air with smoke was black;

Where guns and swords were broken,
Where heaps of dying lay,

Where hand to hand we grappled,
On that burning, bloody day!

Anon our ranks got scattered,
For many a comrade fell,

And we only knew our leader
By his "Give the traitors hell!"

He had no other war cry,
No lingo of command,

But measured death around him,
With a fearless giant hand;

And where the fight was thickest,
Five Grays on a single Blue,

Bill fought like a very demon,
Till the traitors fell or flew.

His aim was sure and fatal,
His stroke like a lightning flash—

He never dodged the bullets,
Nor wavered to the last.

But when the fight was over,
And victory fairly won,

Every traitor dead or dying,
That had fought us ten to one;

Bill groaned in mortal anguish,
Reeled, and muttered as he fell—

"Boys," said he, "I'm dying,
But we gave the traitors hell!"

Then as we gathered 'round him,
A torn and bleeding band,

Each soldier said "God bless you, Bill!"
As we grasped his dying hand.

And Johnny Marsh, a parson's son,
Who lost his arm that day,

Knelt close by Bill, and whispered,
"Old comrade, let us pray."

And as the prayer was ended,
Our hearts were gladdened when

Bill turned his eyes to Heaven,
And with us said, "Amen!"

THOSE BLOODY HANDS.

Did you crush the poor and fallen,
Grinding out that ten per cent.?
Are their ruined homes and fortunes,
Scattered where your pathway went?
Did you, like a Shylock, gather
All those boasted bonds and lands?
If so, ah! my Christian brother,
Hold them up—those bloody hands!

Did you ever swear to love her,
Love a maiden true and fair,
With your heart all black with ruin,
All your burning words a snare?
Did you then forsake the fallen,
Leave her out of wedlock bands?
If so, hold them up to heaven,
Hold them up—those bloody hands!

Was your tongue a snaky member?
Has it stung a bosom friend,
With ungoldly lust or vengeance,
As a motive, or an end?
Shame upon thee, coward! traitor!
This thy forehead even brands.
Hear thy victims, look, O people.
Hold them up—those bloody hands!

Who has read those words of Jesus,
“Blessed he who maketh peace,”
Then invoked a war of hatred,
That through time may never cease?
Was it strife of friend or neighbor?
Or a siege with other lands?
Little odds; ye knave or chieftain,
Hold them up—those bloody hands!

Who has made or sold damnation,
In the shape of cruel rum?
All for lucre, without mercy—
Cursed be the paltry sum!
Households scattered, prospects ruined—
Naught before the demon stands.
Was it you, sir? Hold them up, then,
Hold them up—those bloody hands!

Hear the wail of little children,
Souls immortal, slain unborn.
Doctors, was it you that did it?
Be then of all honor shorn!
Mothers, see ye like Belshazzar,
On your souls these fearful brands,
Ruin? murder? All ye guilty,
Hold them up—those bloody hands!

God of nature, O have mercy!
Teach anew thy great commands,
That, when we may stand before thee,
None shall have "those bloody hands."

THE NEW YEAR—"WATCHING."

Watching, watching, for higher light,
For better views of wrong and right,
For strength to battle, brave and true,
For noble things the whole year through.
The past is dead: its ghastly head
Lies staring at my feet;
But standing by, with giant mein,
The New Year says, "Begin again!"

Watching, watching, for deathless love,
That weds below, nor parts above;
For Mercy, crowned with Faith and Trust,
That knows no moth or gnawing rust.

The right shall win: and cursed sin
This New Year shall not blast.
Nor yet suspicion, black and low,
Shall on my path its shadow throw.

Watching, watching, for peace and rest—
O guide me, God and angels blest!
Let not my path be winding still,
But straight and narrow up the hill;
I've trampled the morass, roved the plain—
May I, this New Year, start again?
I swear I will! nor fiend nor man
Shall turn me back where wrong began.

Watching, watching, for treasures lost
Beneath the waves which madly tost
A frail bark, boldly set afloat,
As if it were an ark, not boat.
O bird with olive branch fly nigh!
O God, with rainbow deck my sky!
Wilt thou, kind heaven, hear my prayer,
And guide my feet from ev'ry snare?

Watching, watching, sad and drear,
None to bless are clinging near;
Heart with warm blood beating brave—
New Year, hast thou power to save?
Other years have come and fled,
And their watchword, "dead! dead! dead!"
Wrings my soul with keenest pain—
Can I, then, begin again?

Hear me, Heaven, hear my vow:
This knee was never bent till now,
But by a faith, new-born and bright,
I pledge myself to Thee, to-night.
The dead *do* live! And high above
A Power to guide and bless and love!
I swear to stand by Thee, O God,
Nor curse again thy chastening rod!

BACKBONE.

When you see a fellow mortal
Without fixed and fearless views,
Hanging on the skirts of others,
Walking in their cast-off shoes,
Bowing low to wealth or favor,
With abject, uncovered head,
Ready to retract or waver,
Willing to be drove or led,
Walk yourself with firmer bearing,
Throw your moral shoulders back;
Show your spine has nerve and marrow—
Just the things that his most lack.
A stronger word
Was never heard,
In sense and tone,
Than this—*backbone!*

When you see a theologian
Hugging close some ugly creed,
Fearing to reject or question
Dogmas which his priest may read;
Holding back all noble feelings,
Choking down each manly view,
Caring more for forms and symbols
Than to know the good and true,
Walk yourself with firmer bearing,
Throw your moral shoulders back;
Show your spine has nerve and marrow—
Just the things that his most lack.
A stronger word
Was never heard,
In sense or tone,
Than this—*backbone!*

When you see a politician
Crawling through contracted holes,
Begging for some fat position
In the ring, or at the polls;

With no sterling manhood in him,
Nothing stable, broad or sound,
Destitute of pluck or ballast,
Double-sided all around,
Walk yourself with firmer bearing,
Throw your moral shoulders back;
Show your spine has nerve and marrow—
Just the things that his most lack.
A stronger word
Was never heard,
In sense or tone,
Than this—*backbone!*

A modest song, and plainly told—
The text is worth a mine of gold;
For many men most sadly lack
A noble stiffness in the back.

DEAD.

The bells toll forth the solemn sound,
Dead!
The wires flash the message round,
Dead!
Each flag half mast,
Each heart downcast,
The raining tears,
A nation's fears—
All now proclaim
With Garfield's name,
The saddest word
Ear ever heard,
Or tongue hath said,
Dead! Dead!

O! brave chief! by death laid low,
From Heaven see thy country's woe!

We watched, and wept, and hoped in vain,
And shared with thee each mortal pain;
Our souls went forth in prayer and praise,
But fate had numbered Garfield's days.
And now from hearts that ached and bled,
An echo tolls, that echo—dead!
The bells peel forth the solemn sound,
Dead!

The wires flash the message round,
Dead!

But is it so?
God answers: "No!"
Whate'er we've said,
He is not dead.
Man cannot die—
The echoes lie
When they have said,
Dead! Dead!

Ye flags, unfurl! tears, cease to flow,
A martyred soul has fled from woe,
In realms of love and peace and rest,
Brave Garfield lives—a hero blessed.
Unless such be, what worth is life?
A sham, a fraud, a godless strife!
O! Faith sublime, we cling to thee—
Life wears a crown—Eternity.

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